



PHIL 6251-10: ADVANCED PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

SPRING 2017

Professor: Avery Archer
Class time: R 5:10-7:00PM
Classroom: ROME 569

Office: 554 Rome Hall
Office Hours: F 1:30-3PM, by apt.
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Course Description

When we are considering if a certain proposition is true—for example, the proposition “climate change is real”—there are three doxastic attitudes we may potentially adopt towards that proposition: we may believe that climate change is real, disbelieve that climate change is real, or be agnostic about whether climate change is real. But when is it rational to believe something, and when are we required to be agnostic or suspend judgement? What is the difference between justified believing and wishful thinking? When we say belief aims at truth, what exactly do we mean? These are some of the questions we shall consider in this course. More generally, we will investigate what makes belief distinct from other psychological attitudes and when it is rationally appropriate for us to believe something.

Prerequisites

This course is open to graduate students and to undergraduates with permission from the instructor.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Reconstruct and critically dissect selected arguments relating to the nature of belief and rational norms governing belief.
- Clearly and succinctly communicate and analyse philosophical arguments and ideas orally.
- Clearly and succinctly communicate and analyse philosophical arguments and ideas in writing.

Grading

Your grade in this course will be determined using a specification grading system (or “specs grading” for short). This grading system is designed to incorporate the most important insights from learning theory, according to which students learn best when they are interested and challenged in a low-stakes environment. See the document “How your grade is determined” distributed during the first day of class (and provided on Blackboard) for further details on how your grade in this class will be determined.

Technology Policy

Laptops, iPads, Kindles, and other electronic devices must be turned off and put away during class, unless required for a particular assignment. There is a zero tolerance policy for texting or any other cell phone use in class. Cell phones may be left on vibrate for emergency notification purposes. If you expect an important phone call, please inform me before class and quietly excuse yourself when you receive it.

Minimum Out-of-Class Learning

In accordance with federal regulation 34 CFR 602.24(f), students are required to spend a minimum of 100 minutes of out-of-class work for every 50 minutes of direct instruction in order to be awarded the relevant credit hours. This means that students should expect to spend at least 5 hours in out-of-class work per week for this course.

Reading Schedule

All the readings listed on the reading schedule (below) are available electronically in the "Course Materials" folder on Blackboard. The following reading schedule is tentative. As the class progresses, and I get a better sense of the needs and interests of the participants, I may make changes to the reading schedule.

Date	Topic	Readings (available online)
01/19	1. The Nature of Belief	Audi, "Dispositional Beliefs and Dispositions to Believe"
01/26	2. The Aim of Belief	Velleman, "On the Aim of Belief"
02/02	3. The Rationality of Belief	Kelly, "The Rationality of Belief"
02/09	4. Propositional Attitudes	Schroeder, "Propositional Attitudes"
02/16	5. Against Propositionalism	Montague, "Against Propositionalism"
02/23	6. For Propositionalism	Sinhababu, "Advantages of Propositionalism"
03/02	7. Non-Propositional Attitudes	Grzankowski, "Non-Propositional Attitudes"
03/09	8. Question-Directed Attitudes	Friedman, "Question-Directed Attitudes"
03/23	8. Suspending Judgement	Friedman, "Why Suspend Judging?"
03/30	9. Deep Disagreement	Feldman, "Deep Disagreement"
04/06	10. On Having Reasons I	Schroeder, "Having Reasons"

04/13	11. On Having Reasons II	Lord, "Having Reasons and the Factoring Account"
04/20	12. Direction of Fit	Humberstone, "Direction of Fit," pp. 59-71
04/27	13. Revising Direction of Fit	Frost, "On the Very Idea of Direction of Fit," pp. 459-484

University Policy on Religious Holidays:

1. Students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance.
2. Faculty should extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up examinations.
3. Faculty who intend to observe a religious holiday should arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or to make other provisions for their course-related activities.

Disability Support Services (DSS):

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Rome Hall, Suite 102, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: gwired.gwu.edu/dss/

Mental Health Services (202-994-5300):

The University's Mental Health Services offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include: crisis and emergency mental health consultations confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals. counselingcenter.gwu.edu/

Academic Integrity Code:

Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. For the remainder of the code, see: studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity